

THE PICTURE OF THE EMBARCATION
OF THE PILGRIMS FROM DELFT-HAVEN
IN HOLLAND; PAINTED BY ROBT. U.
[SIC] WEIR, IN CONFORMITY TO AN
ACT OF CONGRESS FOR FILLING THE
VACANT PANELS IN THE ROTUNDA OF
THE CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON..

ROBINSON, JOHN, 1575?-1625

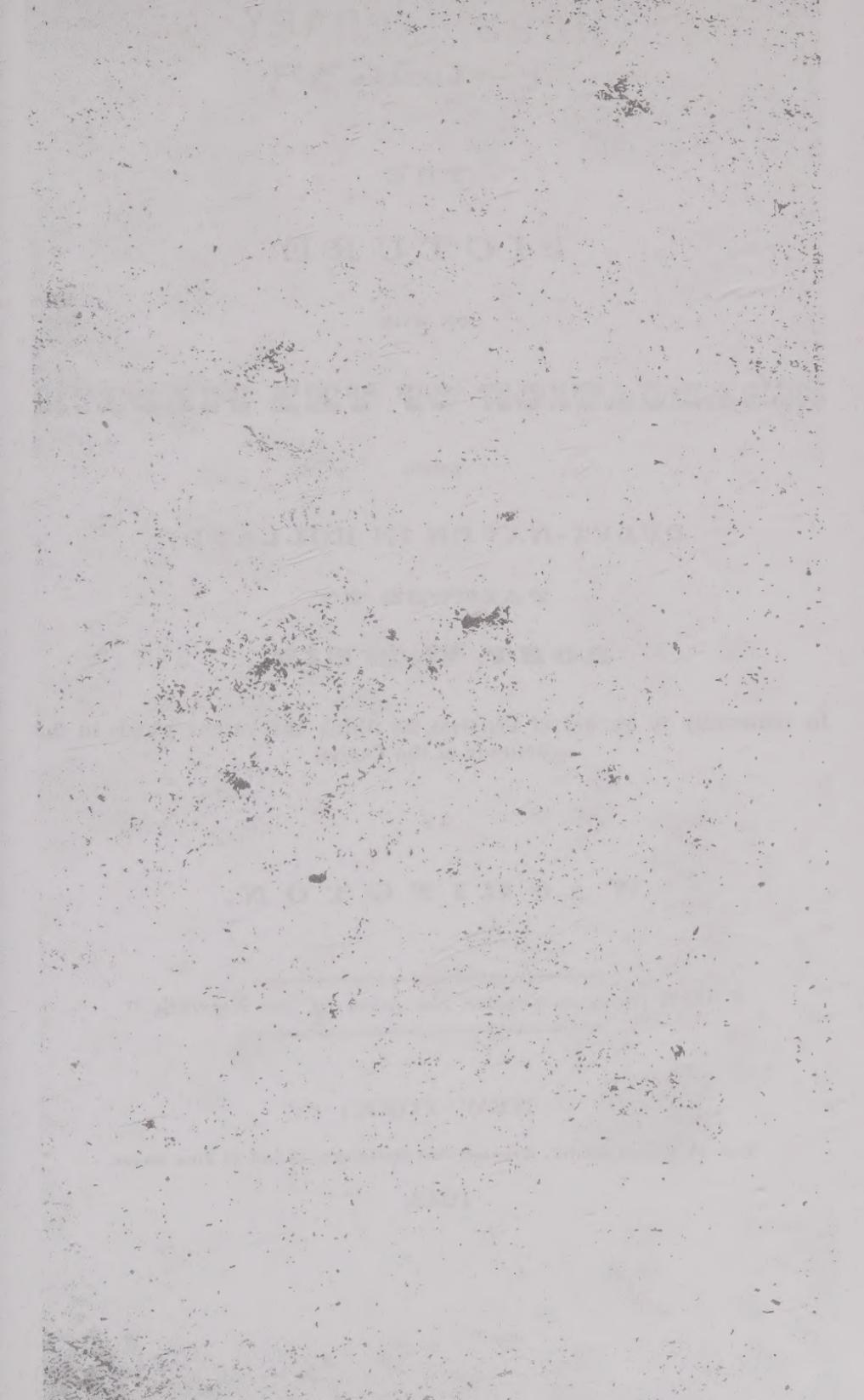




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THE

PICTURE

OF THE

EMBARCATION OF THE PILGRIM

FROM

DELFT-HAVEN IN HOLLAND;

PAINTED BY

ROBT. W. WEIR,

In conformity to an Act of Congress for filling the vacant panels in the
Rotunda of the Capitol

AT

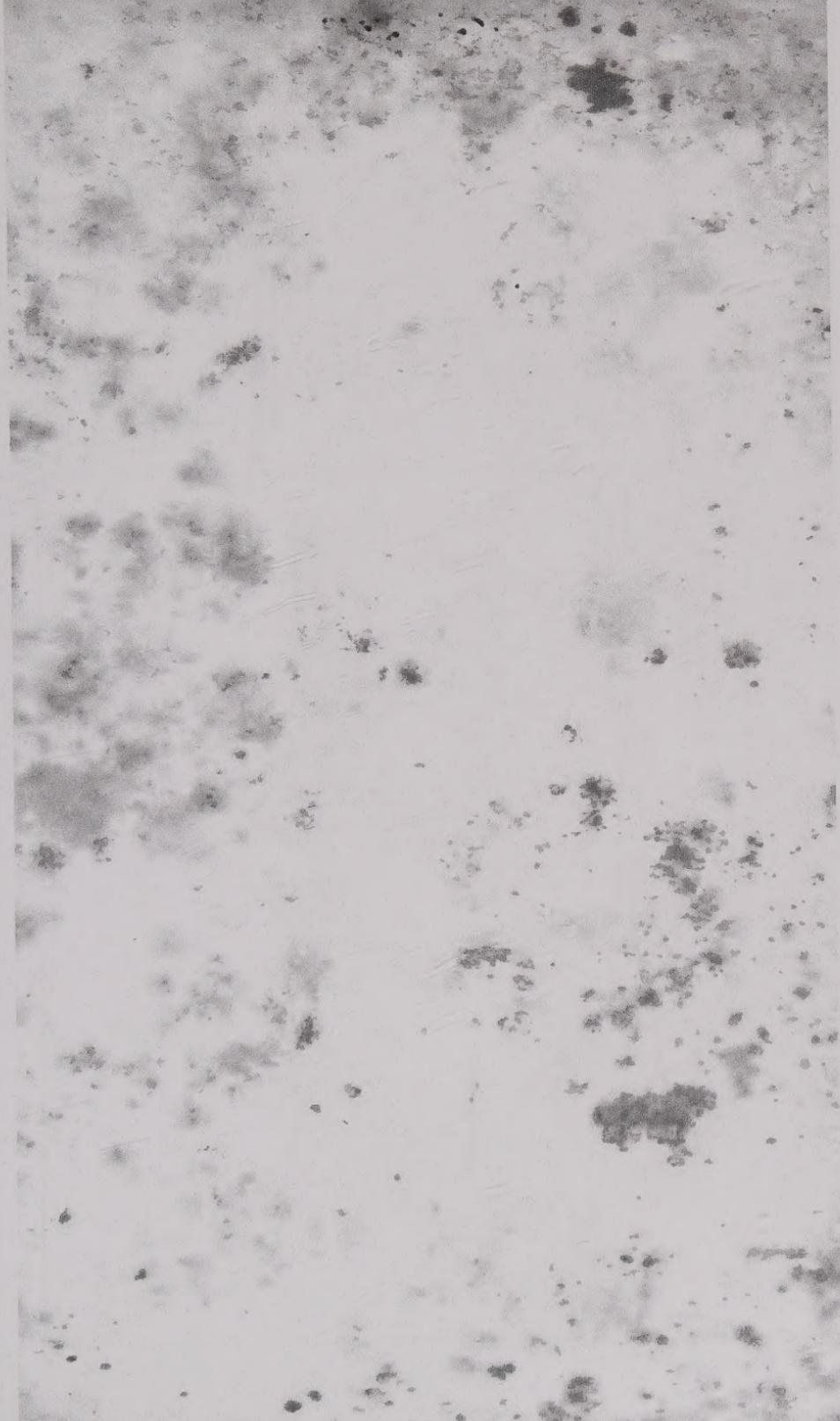
WASHINGTON.

“With these men came the germ of our Republic.”

NEW YORK:

Wm. G. Boggs, Printer, Evening Post Buildings, 23 and 25 Pine Street.

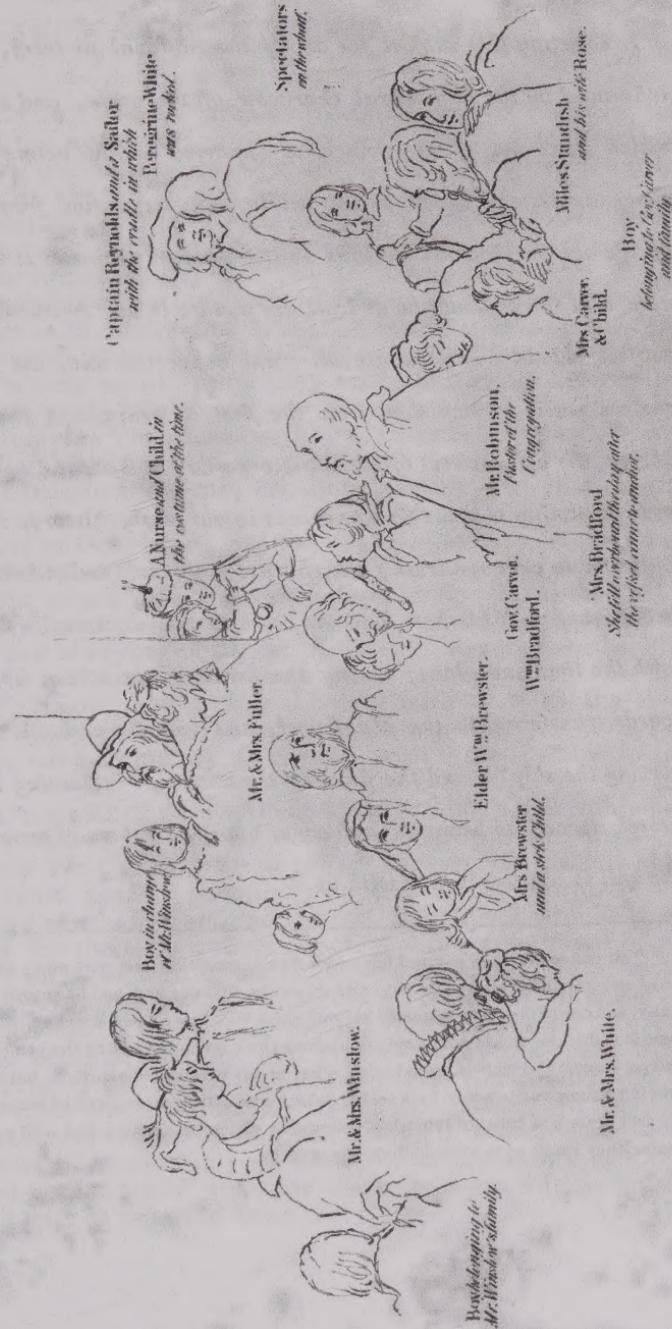
1843.





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In selecting this subject for one of the national pictures, the artist was influenced by the high moral character of the scene, and the great events which grew out of the principles imparted by the actors in it to their descendants, and which finally led to that separation from the dominion of the old world which made us an independent people. It was also desirable that there should be at least one picture in our National Hall, whose subject should commemorate an event connected with the history of our eastern states; since they were the first to grapple in that struggle for liberty, the achievement of which, is our glory and boast.

In depicting a scene so momentous in our early history, it has been my endeavor to preserve truth; the character of each individual is drawn in accordance with his acts, and the costume and accessaries are in keeping with the time and place; among the latter is the screw, which was afterwards transferred to the Mayflower, and was the probable means of preserving the ship—and the fluke of the anchor,—indicating the bow of the vessel, as well as being the emblem of hope,—the bow of promise, and upon the sail is written “God with us.”*

* “ But after they had enjoyed fair winds for a season, they met with many contrary winds and fierce storms, with which their ship was shrewdly shaken, and had her upper works made very leaky, and one of the main beams of her mid-ships was bowed and cracked, which put them to some fear that she would not be able to perform the voyage; on which the principal of the seamen and passengers had serious consultation what to do, whether to return or hold on; But the ship proving strong under water, by a screw (which one of the passengers had brought from Holland,) the said beam was brought into his place again; which being done, and well secured by the Carpenter, they resolved to hold on their voyage,” &c.

FROM THE NEW ENGLAND MEMORIAL.

IN the year 1602, divers godly Christians of our English nation, in the north of England, being studious of reformation, and therefore not only witnessing against human inventions, and additions in the worship of God ; but minding most the positive and practical part of divine institutions, they entered into covenant to walk with God, and one with another, in the enjoyment of the ordinances of God. But finding by experience they could not peaceably enjoy their own liberty in their native country, without offence to others that were differently minded ; they took up thoughts of removing themselves and families into the Netherlands, which accordingly they endeavoured to accomplish, but met with great hindrance ; yet after some time, the good hand of God removing obstructions, they obtained their desires ; arriving in Holland, they settled themselves in the city of Leyden, in the year 1610, and there they continued divers years in a comfortable condition, enjoying much sweet society and spiritual comfort in the ways of God, living peaceably amongst themselves, and being courteously entertained, and lovingly respected by the Dutch, amongst whom they were strangers, having for their pastor, Mr. John Robinson, a man of a learned, polished, and modest spirit, pious and studying of the truth, largely accomplished with suitable gifts and qualifications to be a shepherd over this flock of Christ ; having also a fellow-helper with him in the eldership, Mr. William Brewster, a man of approved piety, gravity, and integrity, very eminently furnished with gifts suitable to such an office.

But notwithstanding their amiable and comfortable carrying on, (as hath been said) although the church of Christ on earth in Holy Writ is sometimes called heaven, yet there is always in their most perfect state, here in this lower world, very much wanting as to absolute and perfect happiness, which is only reserved for the time and place of the full enjoyment of celestial glory ; for, although this church was at peace, and in rest at this time, yet they took up thoughts of removing themselves into America with common consent ; the proposition of removing thither being set on foot, and prosecuted by the elders upon just and weighty grounds ; for although they did quietly and sweetly enjoy their church liberties under the States, yet they foresaw that Holland would be no place for their church and posterity to continue in comfortably, at least in that measure that they hoped to find abroad ; and that for these reasons following, which I shall recite as received from themselves.

First: Because themselves were of a different language from the Dutch where they lived.

Secondly: Because their countrymen, who came over to join them, by reason of the hardness of the country, soon spent their estates, and were then forced either to return back to England, or to live very meanly.

Thirdly: That many of their children, through the extreme necessity that was upon them, although of the best dispositions, and graciously inclined, and willing to bear part of their parents' burthens, were oftentimes so oppressed with their labours, that although their spirits were free and willing, yet their bodies bowed under the weight of the same, and became decrepid in their early youth, and the vigour of nature consumed in the very bud. And that which was very lamentable, and of all sorrows most heavy to be borne was, that many by these occasions and the great licentiousness of youth in that country, and the manifold temptations of the place, were drawn away by evil examples into extravagant and dangerous courses, getting the reins on their necks, and departing from their parents.

Fourthly: That their posterity would in a few generations become Dutch.

Fifthly and lastly, and which was not the least, a great hope and inward zeal they had of laying some good foundation, or at least to make some way thereunto for the propagating and advancement of the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world, yea, although they should be but as stepping-stones unto others for the performance of so great a work.

The reasons of their removal abovenamed being debated first in private, and though weighty, were afterwards propounded in publick; and after solemn days of humiliation observed both in publick and private, it was agreed, that part of the church should go before their brethren into America, to prepare for the rest; and if in case the major part of the church did choose to go over with the first, then the pastor to go along with them; but if the major part stayed, that he was to stay with them.

All things being got ready and provided, a small ship was bought and fitted out in Holland, of about sixty tons, called the *Speedwell*, as to serve to transport some of them over, so also to stay in the country, and attend upon fishing, and such other affairs as might be for the good and benefit of the colony when they came thither.

And the time being come that they must depart, they were accompanied with most of their brethren out of the city unto a town called Delft-Haven, where the ship lay ready to receive them. The next day the wind being fair, they went on board, and their friends with them, where truly doleful was the sight of that sad and mournful parting, to hear what sighs, and sobs, and prayers

did sound amongst them; what tears did gush from every eye, and pithy speeches pierced each other's heart, that sundry of the Dutch strangers that stood on the key as spectators, could not refrain from tears: yet comfortable and sweet it was to see such lively and true expressions of dear and unfeigned love. But the tide (which stays for no man) calling them away, that were thus loth to depart, their reverend pastor falling down on his knees, and they all with him, with watery cheeks commended them with most fervent prayers unto the Lord and his blessing; and then with mutual embraces, and many tears, they took their leave one of another, which proved to be the last leave to many of them. Thus hoisting sail with a prosperous gale of wind, they came in a short time to Southampton, where they found the bigger ship come from London.

At their parting, their pastor, Mr. John Robinson, wrote a letter to the whole company, which is here inserted—

Loving Christian friends:

I do heartily, and in the Lord salute you, as being those with whom I am present in my best affections, and most earnest longing after you, though I be constrained for a while to be bodily absent from you: I say constrained; God knowing how willingly and much rather than otherwise, I would have borne my part with you in this first brunt, were I not by strong necessity held back for the present. Make account of me in the meantime as a man divided in myself, with great pain, and as (natural bonds set aside) having my better part with you: and although I doubt not but in your godly wisdoms you both foresee and resolve upon that which concerneth your present state and condition, both severally and jointly; yet have I thought but my duty to add some further spur of provocation to them that run well already, if not because you need it, yet because I owe it in love and duty. And first, as we are daily to renew our repentance with our God, especially for our sins known, and generally for our unknown sins and transgressions; so doth the Lord call us in a singular manner, upon occasion of such difficulty and danger as lieth upon you, to both a more narrow search and careful reformation of your ways in his sight, lest he calling to remembrance our sins forgotten by us, or unrepented of, take advantage against us, and in judgment leave us for the same to be swallowed up in one danger or other: whereas, on the contrary, sin being taken away by earnest repentance, and the pardon thereof from the Lord sealed up to a man's conscience by his spirit, great shall be his security and peace in all dangers, sweet his comforts in all distresses, with happy deliverance from all evil, whether in life or death. Now next after this heavenly peace with God and our own consciences, we are carefully to provide for, peace with all

men, what in us lieth, especially with our associates; and for that watchfulness must be had, that we neither at all in ourselves do give, no, nor easily take offence being given by others. Woe be to the world for offences, for although it be necessary, considering the malice of Satan and man's corruption, that offences come, yet wo unto the man, or woman either, by whom the offence cometh, saith Christ, Matt. xviii. 7, and if, offences in the unreasonable use of things, in themselves indifferent, be more to be feared than death itself, as the apostle teacheth, 1 Cor. ix. 15, how much more in things simply evil, in which neither the honour of God, nor love of man is thought worthy to be regarded? Neither yet is it sufficient that we keep ourselves by the grace of God from giving offence, except withal we be armed against the taking of them when they are given by others. For how imperfect and lame is the work of grace in that person, who wants charity to cover a multitude of offences? as the scripture speaks. Neither are you to be exhorted to this grace, only upon the common grounds of Christianity, which are, that persons ready to take offence, either want charity to cover offence, or wisdom duly to weigh human frailty; or lastly, are gross though close hypocrites, as Christ our Lord teacheth; Matt. vii. 1, 2, 3, as indeed, in my own experience, few or none have been found which sooner give offence, than such as easily take it; neither have they ever proved sound and profitable members in societies, who have nourished this touchy humour. But besides these, there are divers motives provoking you above others to great care and conscience this way; as first, you are many of you strangers as to the persons, so to the infirmities one of another, and so stand in need of more watchfulness this way, lest when such things fall out in men and women as you suspected not, you be inordinately affected with them, which doth require at your hands much wisdom and charity for the covering and preventing of incident offences that way. And lastly, your intended course of civil community will minister continual occasion of offence, and will be as fuel for that fire, except you diligently quench it with brotherly forbearance; and if taking offence causelessly or easily at man's doings, be so carefully to be avoided; how much more heed is to be taken that we take not offence at God himself? Which yet we certainly do, so oft as we do murmur at his providence in our crosses, or bear impatiently such afflictions as wherewithal he pleaseth to visit us. Store up therefore patience against the civil day, without which, we take offence at the Lord himself in his holy and just works. A further thing there is carefully to be provided for, viz: that with your common employments, you join common affections truly bent upon the general good, avoiding, as a deadly plague of your both common and special comforts, all retiredness of mind for proper advantage, and all singu-

larly affected any manner of way; let every man repress in himself, and the whole body in each person, as so many rebels against the common good, all private respects of men's selves, not sorting with the general convenience. And as men are careful not to have a new house shaken with any violence, before it be well settled, and the parts firmly knit; so be you, I beseech you, much more careful that the house of God, (which you are, and are to be,) be not shaken with unnecessary novelties, or other oppositions at the first settling thereof.

Lastly, whereas you are to become a body politick, using amongst yourselves civil government, and are not furnished with special eminency above the rest, to be chosen by you into office of government; let your wisdom and godliness appear not only in choosing such persons as do entirely love, and will promote the common good; but also, in yielding unto them all due honour and obedience in their lawful administration, not beholding in them the ordinariness of their persons, but God's ordinance for your good; not being like the foolish multitude who more honour the gay coat, than either the virtuous mind of man, or the glorious ordinance of God. But you know better things, and that the image of the Lord's power and authority, which the magistrate beareth, is honourable, in how mean persons soever; and this duty you both may the more willingly, and ought the more conscientiously to perform, because you are (at least for the present) to have them for your ordinary governors, which yourselves shall make choice of for that work.

Sundry other things of importance I could put you in mind of, and of those before mentioned in more words; but I will not so far wrong your godly minds, as to think you heedless of these things, there being also divers amongst you well able to admonish both themselves and others of what concerneth them. These few things therefore, and the same in few words, I do earnestly commend to your care and conscience, joining therewith my daily incessant prayers unto the Lord, that he who hath made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and all rivers of waters, and whose providence is over all his works, especially over all his dear children for good, would so guide and guard you in your ways, as inwardly by his spirit, so outwardly by the hand of his power, as that you, and we also, for and with you may have after matter of praising his name all the days of your and our lives. Fare you well in Him in whom you trust, and in whom I rest.

An unfeigned well wisher to your happy success in this hopeful voyage.

JOHN ROBINSON.

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